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CIA director admits conflicts of conscience

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WASHINGTON — Central Intelligence Agency Director Geroge Bush conceded Thursday that "limited" conflicts of conscience are involved with his job, but he said necessity sometimes demands "compromise with the purity of moral decisions."

"I know in a limited way there are some conflicts," he said in a speech to about 150 members of the Texas Breakfast Club.

"But we're not living in a particularly moral world ... we're living in a world that's not pure black or pure white. We're living in a world where (the United States) has to have a covert capability."

Bush said his knowledge of Soviet and Chinese intelligence — gathering operations, learned during his previous service as ambassador to the United Nations and U.S. envoy to Peking, had convinced him of the necessity for maintaining a strong CIA.

The former Houston congressman and national Republican chairman said he is "not unconcerned about the constitutional questions that the excesses of the past (by the CIA) have raised."



Bush

In the future, he pledged, he will "see to it that we do not violate the constitutional rights of any American."

Despite its past misdeeds, Bush strongly supported the CIA as an institution.

"I'm not going to defend the things that were clearly wrong but I'm not going to dwell on them either," he said. "I'm not going to waste my time answering (criticisms of the agency that amount to) outrageous charges."

Some allegations against the CIA are totally untrue and "outlandishly mischievous in their origin," he said.

For example, he said, the agency has been accused without foundation of providing \$1 million to the 1948 presidential campaign of Republican Thomas E. Dewey, even though the CIA director at the time had been appointed by Dewey's opponent, Democratic President Harry S. Truman.

"I'm happy to say," Bush said, "I think things are moving away from the more sensational revelations of the past."

More and more Americans now "recognize the necessity" of a strong intelligence-gathering operation, one that is "second to none in the world," he said.

There even are fewer people, Bush laughed, asking him these days whether his own telephone is tapped.

Morale at the CIA has recovered from a low point in 1975, recruitment of new agents and employees is up and "the institution is intact," he said.

CIA personnel also have a renewed "dedication and sense of sacrifice," Bush said, that provides the agency with an "amazing human asset."